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Kilns,
Mills, Millers, Meal,
AND
Bread.

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KILNS,
MILLS, MILLERS, MEAL
AND
BREAD.

BY
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W
PITSLIGO.



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FOREWORD.

THE contents of this little book were collected for the most part by myself from the mouths of the folk in my wanderings during years on short holidays in the North and North-East of Scotland. It was read as a communication to the Buchan Field Club, at a meeting held on Friday, the 30th of November 1894. To all who have given me help I give my warmest thanks.

PITSLIGO, FRASERBURGH,
18th December, 1894.



KILNS, MILLS, MILLERS, MEAL AND BREAD.

KILNS.

I.

1. NOT a few farmers up to the middle of this century had kilns of their own. The construction of the kiln was something as follows :—On the top of the walls were laid cross beams a few feet distant from each other. These were called “kiln kebbars.” Across these were laid, somewhat close to each other, pieces of wood, often small fir trees split in two by an axe. These had the name of “stickles.” Over these was laid a quantity of straw, all “drawn” and placed quite smooth. This straw was called “beddin” or “kiln-beddin.” From it comes the proverbial expression “As dry’s kiln-beddin,” which is still applied to anything extremely dry, especially to hay or grain ready to be stacked. The front below this was walled up, with an opening of a few feet high left in the middle. The space below the kebbars, stickles, and straw, and walled up, was called the “kiln-lyogie” or “kiln-logie.” In this was kindled the fire to dry the grain. It required the very greatest care to so regulate the fire as not to set the whole in a blaze. No less care was needed in turning the grain in the act of drying, and in taking it off when fully dried and fit to be taken to the mill to be ground into meal. Some of the grain did fall through, but the “logie” floor was carefully swept, and the grain gathered. There were traditions of the “beddin” being set on fire and the whole burned “stoop an roop.” There were traditions of the poor people, in times of scarcity, drying their grain in a pot and grinding it on the quern.—*Keith*.

II.—KILNS AND DIVINATION.

2 (a). If a girl wished to know who was to be her husband, she took a male lamb’s fleece, teased it, carded it, and span it at the doorstep. She wound it into a ball or clew, and on Halloweven she went into the kiln, seated herself

on one of the kiln "kebbars" or rafters, threw the clew into the "lyogie," holding the end of the thread in her hand, and then began to unwind it. When coming to the end of it she called out, "Who's that that holds the end of my thread." The answer came by naming the name of the future husband.

A young woman in Alvie, a long time ago, did this and went to the kiln. She was seen by a man who disapproved of such practices, and he resolved to give her a lesson. He contrived to hide himself in the "kiln-lyogie," and when the girl called out, "Who is it that holds the end of my thread?" he gave the name of a foolish lad in the district. She took fright and ran to the house. Such a hold did the matter take on her that she went to bed and lay in despair. After a few days the man went to her and made her confess what she had done. He then told her that it was he that had held the end of the thread, and warned her never to try such practices. She regained her composure, and was afterwards wiser than to "win the clew."—*Alvie*.

(b). In some districts the clew had to be of blue yarn. It might be of any wool. To win the "blue clew" was the saying. The words used were, "I win the blue clew : Fah hauds ma ein?"—*Keith, Lonmay*.

III.—KILNS AND SUPERNATURAL BEINGS.

3 (a). People were afraid to go at night in the dark into kilns used for drying grain. "Feart things" were seen in them. A man was one night drying grain. He saw a cat go past him and right through the furnace.—*Dyke*.

(b). A creature called the "kiln-carle" was believed to dwell in the "logie." He was of a savage disposition, at least if provoked. No one would have been bold enough to have gone to a kiln during night and challenged him with the words :—

Kiln-carle teethless,
Come oot an mack me eesless.

—*Lonmay*.

MILLS.

I.

1. The tradition used to be that when meal mills were introduced into the country those sites were chosen to which water to drive the wheel flowed naturally. There must be no artificial embanking to lead the water, and little or no turning of the water from its natural run. The site of the mill was fore-ordained by Providence. Man had only to use his powers to find out the site.—*Keith*.

2. When a new millstone was to be laid, the gudewife, the day before, made ready bread, cakes, and ale for the ceremony. On the day of placing it the nearest neighbours were invited.—*Kinellar*.

3. It was a custom in some places to put one into the hopper the first time he or she entered a mill.—*Told by one so treated*.

4. The mills first in use did not winnow the dried grain when husked. The husk or "shillin sids" had to be separated by the hand by means of riddles. This could be done only in favourable weather, with a moderate wind to carry off the husks. A pretty high open spot near the mill was set aside for this operation. It went by the name of the "shillin-hill." When one had a "mailyer" at the mill, a day was fixed for the work, and its owner, along with others of the household, had to attend to winnow the "shillin" on the "shillin-hill." It was at times cold weather, and there was a saying among the old that "mony ane got their dehd or deed o' the shillin-hill."—*Keith*.

5. Meal mills had not at first machinery to sift from the meal any husks that might have been on the grain or amongst it. To separate these sieves had to be used. These sieves were made commonly of sheep skin, and the holes were punched in patterns often quite artistically. They were called "meal sieves." When the meal was being ground there were present the owner and one or two of the household to do the sifting. The husks, with the meal that was mixed up with them, are called "prone," from which is made "sones" or "sowans."—*Keith*.

6. The wheel of a mill could be stopped by throwing into the race some mould taken from a churchyard—"meels"—at twelve o'clock at night, repeating the Lord's Prayer backward during the act of casting the "meels" into the water. This act was called "reestin the mill."—*Keith*.

7. When a mill was burned the fairies got all that was consumed by the fire.—*Corgarff*.

II.—MILLS AND THE FAIRIES.

1 (a). The mill had to be thrown out of gear at night to prevent the fairies from setting it on and using it during night.—*Keith*.

(b). At each mill was kept a stone whorl, which was fixed at night on the spindle to prevent the fairies from setting the mill a-going.—*Corgarff*.

(c). Fairies had oats which they threshed at night in the farmers' barns, and they ground them into meal in the meal mills. It was accounted lucky to get possession of the fairies' meal, however small the quantity. Millers, therefore, if they heard them grinding their corn at night on their mills, would next

morning look most carefully for any particles of meal that might have been left on the stones and gather them in hopes that some of them might be fairy meal.

(d). The Mill of Whitehill, New Deer, was often used by the fairies to grind their oats. One night old John Fraser, the miller, by some secret of his craft, "restit," i.e. arrested, the mill, so that the machinery would not move, and then hid himself in a straw "cassie" on the "bauks" of the couples. At midnight the fairies came to the mill and proceeded to grind their grain. The water was let on. It only broke over the wheel, and the machinery would not move. The fairy men and women examined every wheel and pinion, but there was nothing wanting or out of gear. When they were on the eve of leaving the miller came from his hiding-place and set on the mill. The fairies ground their corn. When they were going away one of the women, in gratitude for what had been done, gave the miller a "goupenfou" of the meal and told him to pack a little of it into each of the four corners of the empty girnall, saying, at the same time, that he would not see it empty for a long time. For seven years the girnall was never "teem,"—empty.

(e). There is a meal mill at Pooldhu, near Dunphail, parish of Edinkellie. It was very much frequented by the fairies to grind their corn at night. Though they paid the miller the "mooter," the price for grinding the corn, their coming to the mill so frequently proved a source of annoyance. A woman undertook to stay over night in the mill and rid it of them, on condition of getting a goose to roast at the "kiln-logie." The goose was readily given. The woman made ready the bird for roasting and took her place in the kiln, put on a good fire, and hung the goose before it to roast. She then took a pot, filled it with water which was brought up to the boiling point, put a ladle amongst it, and kept the pot beside her. By and by the fairies began to arrive, and busy themselves with the grinding of their corn. After a time, when the goose was nearly cooked, one of the fairies came to the woman, poked his finger into the bird, and asked her what her name was. "My name's Mysel an Mysel," was the answer. The fairy went away, but came back in a short time and again poked a finger into the goose. This act was repeated a good many times. The woman at last seized the ladle and dashed some of the boiling water over the fairy. Off he ran to the others. They asked him who had thrown the water over him and burned him, and he answered, "Mysel an Mysel burned mysel." After this all of them went to the woman and told her they wished to get some sort of work from her. She set them to keep her pot full of water by carrying water for it in a sieve. This they tried to do, but failed, work as they might. They got tired out with the fruitless labour, said she was a bad mistress, and left her. They never returned to the mill.—*Edinkellie.*

IV.—MILLS AND WATER-KELPIE.

I (a). Three handfuls of “groats,” *i.e.* shelled grain, thrown into the hopper of a meal mill at night, keep water-kelpie from interfering with the mill.—*Corgarff*.

(b). A miller was annoyed by a kelpie entering his mill and playing havoc among the grain and meal. One night he put his boar in the mill, for millers generally keep such an animal with a breeding sow or two. As usual kelpie came into the mill. The boar stood on his defence and fought kelpie. Next night the creature came to the miller's window and called to him, “Is there a chattie i' the mill the nicht?” “Aye, there is a chattie i' the mill, an will be for ever mair.” Kelpie never returned to the mill.—*Aberdour*.

(c). A kelpie in Braemar, on Deeside, had taken a liking for a woman that lived not far from the Mill of Quoich. This woman's meal at one time failed her, and she had not very good means of supplying her want. Kelpie knew her case and resolved to come to her help. So one night on which he knew corn was being ground on the mill, he went to it after the miller had made everything ready for the night's grinding and had gone to his house for the night's rest. In these old days mills ground slowly, and it was not unusual for the miller to put as much grain into the hopper as would keep the mill at work till he returned next morning. So it was in this case. Kelpie had been watching his time, and when the miller left the mill at work he entered it and waited patiently till the sack that received the ground grain was full. He then lifted the sack on his back and left the mill. It was now “the grey o' the morning,” and the miller had left his bed and was making for the mill to see if all had gone on well during night. He spied a tall man with a full sack on his back coming round a corner of the mill. Seizing the “fairy whorl” that was lying at one of the corners, he hurled it at him with a threat and an oath. “Kelpie or nae kelpie, G—d d—— you, a'll brack your leg.” The whorl took effect and broke a leg. The kelpie made for the “mill-lead” (mill-race), tumbled into it, was carried by it into the Dee and was drowned. This was the last kelpie that lived in the Braes o' Mar.

(d). Kelpie was sometimes employed in the building of mills. Beside Mill of Myagie there are some very large boulders, so large that they are beyond human strength to move. The story is that they, as well as the stones with which the mill is built, were carried by kelpie. On regaining his liberty he took to flight repeating the words :—

Sairs ma back,
Sairs ma behns,
Caain Mill o' Myagie's stehns.

—*Forghlen*.

V.—RIDDLES.

1.

(a)

It is in every mountain,
 But not in every hill ;
 It's no in all the world,
 But yet it's in the mill ;
 It is as yet like the mill-door
 And Miggie like the cat :
 Although ye guess till the morn
 Ye will not guess that.

(Strichen)

(b)

It is in the mill,
 But not in the happer ;
 It is in the dam,
 But not in the water ;
 It is in Monymoss,
 But not in Fetternear ;
 It has been in Lumphanan
 This four hunner year.

(Meiklefolla)

(c)

It's aye i' the mill, but nae i' the happer ;
 It's aye i' the dam, but nae i' the water ;
 It's in Monymusk, but nae in Fetternear ;
 It's been in Lumphanan this five hunner year.

(Kinellar)

(d)

It's in the mill, but nae in the kiln ;
 It's in the mountain, but nae in the hill ;
 It is in Monymoss, but nae in Fetternear ;
 It's been in Lumphanan this five hunner year.

(?)

(e)

It's in the mill, but nae in the kiln ;
 It's in the mountain, but nae in the hill ;
 It's in the timmer, but nae in the tree ;
 It's nae in the wurdle, nor is't in the sea.

(Tyrie)

(f)

It is in every mountain,
 It's not in any hill,
 But yet it's in the mill.

(Rathen)

2.

(a)

Down in the meadow I heard a low,
 The dead man seeking a drink.

(Granton)

(b)

Doon in yon how
 I heard a coo low
 Like a dead man seekin a drink.

(Lonmay)

(c)

Doon in yon how
 I heard a coo low,
 A dead man seekin a drink.

(Fraserburgh)

(d)

Doon in yon chaumer
 I heard a great clamour,
 A dead man seekin a drink.

(Leochel-Cushnie)

(e)

Doon in yon meadow
 I keepit twa swine,
 There was ane o' them my fadder's
 An the idder was mine.

Two mills. (Lonmay)

3.

What is that gangs doon the water and doon the water an never wins t' the en' ? (Tyrie)

4.

What gangs aye to the head of the water and never wins farther ? (Crimond)

5 (a).

What is't it gyangs up the water and up the water an never wins t' the head o't? (Keith)

(b)

What is it that goes up the water and never wins t' the head o't? (Leochel-Cushnie)

(c)

What is it that aye goes up the water and never gets to the head o't? (?)

(d)

Up the water, up the water

An never comes t' the en' o't? (Meiklefolla)

What is it that goes up the water and up the water and is in the same place at night?

(Cullen)

A variant—

And is always in the same place at even? (Cullen)

(e)

What is it that goes up and up the water and never comes to the end? (Cullen)

(f)

It gangs up the water and up the water

And never wins to the top o' the water? (Fochabers)

6.

What is it that runs in the water and never gets to the end? (Strichen)

7 (a).

What goes through and through the water and never comes to an end? (?)

(b)

It gangs through the water and through the water and never wins to the end of the water.

(Lonmay)

VI.—THE TWA DOGIES AND THE MILL.

1. Take hold of a child's legs, one in each hand, and say:—"Come we'll pit (put) the dogies t' the mill." Holding up the one leg, the question is asked:—"Faht did this ane dee (do)?" "He took a lick oot o' this wife's meal pyock." Holding up the other the nurse says:—"An faht did this ane dee?" "He took a lick oot o' that wife's meal pyock." Then the legs are crossed rapidly over each other with the words:—"An cam hame lep for lap, lep for lap."—*Corgarff*.

2. The child is placed on the knee of the mother or nurse, with the back to her, and the legs hanging over her knees. She then takes a leg in each hand, and moves them across and across each other, first to one side and then to another, as if going a journey. Then she holds them as licking meal, and, after that, as drinking water. On the return journey she crosses them over

each other with great rapidity. All the time she keeps repeating the words that correspond to each action of running, licking, and drinking :—

(a)

There wiz twa dogies geed awa t' the mill,
An they took a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' the next wife's pyock,
An a drinkie oot o' the dam,
An geed awa hame, loupie for spang, loupie
for spang. (Pitsligo)

(b)

Twa little dogies geed tae the mull,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An doon t' the lade,
An a drink oot o' the dam,
An geed hame again, hame again, loupie for
spang.

(c)

Twa dogies geed t' the mill,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' the next wife's pyock,
An a bite oot o' the bank,
An a leb oot o' the dam,
An they geed hame loupie for spang.
(Strichen)

(d)

Twa dogies geed away to the mill,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pouck,
An a lick oot o' that wife's pouck,
An a lappit oot o' the dam,
An they geed hame
Lapperty spang, lapperty spang,
Spang, spang, spang, lapperty spang.
(Peterhead 40 years ago)

(e)

Twa dogies geed tae the mill,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pyockie,
An a lick oot o' this wife's pyockie,
An a lep oot o' the dam,
Syne aff at the gallop they ran.

(Meiklefolla)

(f)

The dogies tae the mull,
The dogies tae the mull;
A lick oot o' this wife's pock,
A lick oot o' this wife's pock,
A leb oot o' the dam,
An hame, hame, hame,
An loupie for spang,
An loupie for spang.

(Roschearty)

(g)

There was twa dogies gaed tae the mull,
They took a lick oot ae wife's pock,
An a lick oot anither's wife's pock,
An syne gaed hame,
Loupie for spang, spang, spang.
(Strichen)

(h)

Dogies t' the mill, dogies t' the mill,
A lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' that wife's pyock,
An a leb oot o' the dam,
An they geed hame loupie for spang.
(Pitsligo)

(i)

Twa dogies geed to the mull,
They took a lick oot o' this man's pock,
And a lick oot o' that man's pock,
And a lab, lab oot o' the dam,
And hame ower ither, and ower ither, and
ower ither. (Glenrinnies)

(j)

Twa dogies gaed to the mill,
They took a lick oot o' this poke,
An a lick oot o' that poke,
An a leb oot o' the dam,
They gaed loupie for spang ower the mill dam,
An gaed todlin hame, todlin hame.
(Banff)

(k)

Dogies t' the mill, dogies t' the mill :
A lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
A lick oot o' that wife's pyock,
An a leb oot o' the dam,
An hame they go, hame they go,
Loupie for loup an spang. (Banff)

(l)

Twa dogies geed loupin, loupin t' the mill,
Took a lick oot o' ae wife's bag,
Took a lick oot o' another wife's bag,
An a lab oot o' the mill-dam,
Stoupie for loupie, hame again even.
(Elgin)

(m)

Twa little dogies ran t' the mill,
This road an that road,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' that wife's pyock,
An went hame loupie for spang.

(n)

Twa little dogies ran to the mill,
This road and that road,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's poek,
And a lick oot o' that wife's poek,
And went hame
Loupie for spang. (Peterhead)

(o)

Twa dogies geed t' the mill,
This wye an that wye, this wye an that wye,
Took a laip oot this wife's pyock,
An a laip oot that wife's pyock,
An a laip oot o' the dam,
An a bite oot o' the bank,
An cam hame loupie for spang.

(Tough)

(p)

Twa dogies geed t' the mill,
This way and that way, that way and this
way,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' that wife's pyock,
An a laip oot o' the dam,
An they cam hame loupie for spang, loupie
for spang. (Aberdeen)

(q)

I sent the dogies t' the mill,
This wye an that wye;
A lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' that wife's pyock,
A lick fae the miller,
An anither fae's man,
A lap i' the lead,
An a lick i' the dam,
An hame again loupie for spang, loupie for
spang. (Slains)

(r)

Twa dogies geed t' the mill,
This wye an that wye,
That wye an this wye,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's pyock,
An a lick oot o' that wife's pyock,
An a laip oot o' the dam,
An they cam hame
Loupie for spang, loupie for spang.

(?)

(s)

The dogies gang to the mill,
This way an that way, this way an that way,
Tack a lick oot o' this wife's puock,
An lick oot o' that wife's puock,
An a lick oot o' the mutur,
An a lap oot o' the dam,
An they ran awa, loupie for spang, loupie
for spang,
An ower the mill dam, an ower the mill dam.

(?)

(t)

The dogies gaed to the mill,
This way and that way,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's poke,
And a lick oot o' that wife's poke,
And a loup i' the lade, an a dip in the dam,
And gaed hame wallop in, wallop in, wallop in.

(?)

(u)

There was dogies gaed to the mill,
This wye and that wye,
At the loup an the spang, at the loup an
the spang,
They took a lick oot o' this wife's poke,
An a lick oot o' that wife's poke,
An a lape i' the lade, an a loup i' the brae,
They got a bite fae the miller,
An anither fae's man,
An hame they cam
At the loup an the spang, at the loup an
the spang.

(?)

(v)

The dogies gaed tae the mill,
This wye an that wye, this wye an that wye,
Took a lick oot o' this wife's meal pouck,
An a lick oot o' that wife's meal pouck,
An owre the mill-dam, an owre the mill-
dam. (Cushnie)

(w)

Dogies ging to the mill,
This wye an that wye,
A lick oot o' this wife's poek,
An a lick oot o' that wife's poek,
An a drink o' the dam,
An a dip o' the lade,
Then came loup in, loup in a' the wye hame.

(?)

(x)

The dogie gyangs t' the mill,
 This gate an that gate,
 It gets a lick oot o' this wifie's pyock,
 An a lick oot o' that wifie's pyock,
 An it came hame loupie for spang, loupie for
 spang. (Alvah)

(y)

The following variant is from a fisher-
 woman in Rosehearty. It is interesting, as
 the last line no doubt refers to the mode of
 barter carried on by the fisher folks in the
 disposal of their fish over the country, when
 each woman returned with her "pyokies
 foo" :—

This is the wye the dogies gang t' the mill,
 This wye an that wye,
 Took a leb oot o' the lead,
 An another oot o' the dam,
 An this viz the wye it they cam back again.
 Loupie for spang, loupie for spang,
 An their pyokies foo.

(z)

Twa dogies geed t' the mill,
 Loupie for spang, loupie for spang ;
 An they got a lick oot o' this wifie's pyock,
 An a lick oot o' that wifie's pyock,
 An a slab oot o' the dam,
 An hame they cam
 Loupie for spang. (Aberdour)

(aa)

The dogies geed t' the mill,
 Needle-noddle, needle-noddle, needle-noddle;
 Tack a lick oot o' this wifie's pyock,
 A lick oot o' that wifie's pyock,
 A bite o' the bank,
 A slab i' the dub,
 A drink o' the lade,
 An hame spangie for spangie,
 Spangie for spangie, spangie for spangie.
 (Auchterless)

The two last lines have a variant :—
 An hame loupie for spangie,
 Loupie for spang, loupie for spangie.

(bb)

Pit your dogies to the mull,
 Pit he over him, pit he over him,
 Loupie for spang, loupie for spang.
 A lick oot o' this wifie's pyock,
 An a lick oot o' the next wifie's pyock ;
 A lick fae the miller,
 An a lick fae his man ;

A lickie oot o' the trough,
 An a labe oot o' the dam.
 Haimie gin even, haimie gin (before) even,
 He over him, an he over him.
 That's Willie Wandie,
 An that pauls him. (Macduff)

(cc)

They gaung loup for lowie,
 Oot ower mill knowie,
 An doon the mill howie,
 A lick oot o' this chiel's sack,
 An a lick oot o' that chiel's sack,
 A lick oot o' the happer,
 An a drink oot o' the dam,
 An then loup for lowie,
 Oot ower mill knowie,
 An loup, an loup, an hame. (Strathdon)

(dd)

Pit yir dogies t' the mill,
 Ower ither, an ower ither, an ower ither,
 An a lick oot o' this wifie's pyock,
 An a lick oot o' that wifie's pyock,
 An a slab oot o' the dam,
 An hame loupie for spang, loupie for spang,
 loupie for spang. (Aberdour)

(ee)

Ca the dogies to the mill,
 Ca the dogies to the mill,
 They took a lick oot o' the hopper,
 And a laib oot o' the dam,
 And went hame
 Loupie for spang, loupie for spang.
 (Peterhead)

(ff')

Ca the dogies t' the mill,
 Ca the dogie : t' the mill,
 They took a lick oot o' the happer,
 An a laib oot o' the dam,
 An they went hame loupie for spang.
 (Banchory)

(gg)

Tak a leb oot o' this mull dam,
 An a leb oot o' that mull dam,
 An a lick oot o' this meel pyock,
 An a lick oot o' that meel pyock,
 An she over him, an he over her,
 An they baith hame,
 Loupie for spang, loupie for spang.
 (Pitsligo)

VII.—THE CATIE AND THE MOOSIE.

This was a rhyme that was sung to children. When the last line was sung the singer made a clutch at one of the children, in imitation of a cat seizing a mouse :—

A catie at a mill door sat spinnin, spinnin,
 Fin by comes a moosie rinnin, rinnin.
 Says the moosie t' the catie,
 "Faht are ye deen, my winsome laidie?"
 "Spinnin a sark t' my braw new son,"
 Quo the cat, quo she.
 "Weel may he brook it, my winsome laidie."

changing tone of voice—

"If he dizna brook it ill, he'll brook it weel,"
 Quo the cat, quo she.
 "A swypit my hoose clean the streen, my winsome laidie."

In a harsher tone, and always increasing in harshness—

"Ye didna sit in't fool than,"
 Quo the cat, quo she.
 "An I fan a penny in't, my winsome laidie."
 "Ye didna wint siller than,"
 Quo the cat, quo she.
 "An I bocht cheese wee't, my winsome laidie."
 "Ye didna wint meht than,"
 Quo the cat, quo she.
 "An I ate it up, my winsome laidie."
 "So will I you."

(Aberdeen)

VIII.—RHYMES.

1. There was a mousie in a mill,
 Rinktum, billydilly, kymee,
 And a frogie in a well,
 Rinktum, billydilly, kymee.

Chorus—

Kymeerie, kistickeerie,
 Kymeerie, kymee,
 Strim, stram, pa-mi-needle,
 Arra bonnie ringtang,
 Reektum, billydilly, kymee. (Aberdeen)

IX.—PROVERBIAL SAYINGS.

1. A layin hen's better nor a stanin mill.
2. Gaes much water by the mill, the miller kens not.
3. Muckle water rins by that the miller wats na o'.
4. Nae mills, nae meal.

5. Never came a wife well pleased frae the mill but one, and she broke her neck.

6 (a). Ye can mack a kirk an a mill o't.

(b). Ye can mack a kirk an a mill o't, an grin' corn i' the tae eyne o't an preach i' the tither.

Said to one about the use to be made of anything of which you are quite indifferent or careless.

7. Ye was bred about the mill, ye've mouped a' your manners.

MILLERS.

I.

1. At one time the tenants on the lands of Artamford were thirled, or "bun-sucken," to the Mill of Whitehill. One stipulation was that the miller had to grind any quantity in one day that might be brought to him, provided due notice was given. Somehow the miller or the arrangement was not giving satisfaction. A plan was entered into to bring about the annulment of the 'thirlage. All the farmers of the thirled lands gave notice that they wished their grain ground on a certain day. Each farmer gave his own order separately. At that time the corn was all dried at home and carried to the mill on the backs of the horses. So for days before the kilns were in full operation and grain was being carried in quantities daily to the mill. James Fraser, the miller, knew he could not fulfil the stipulation, such was the quantity of grain brought to the mill, and he knew full well he would loose his customers if he failed to grind their corn on the appointed day. He was at his wits' end, and in his extremity he went to take counsel with the miller of Bruxie, whose name was Legge. He was noted for his skill. He heard his brother miller's story. He told him to go home and give himself no more trouble about the matter, and made him a promise that he would be at the Mill of Whitehills on the appointed day prepared to grind any quantity of grain that might be brought. On the morning of the day fixed for grinding the miller of Bruxie "reestit" his own mill and took its speed with him. He then went along the burn-bank to the Mill of Afforthie, "reestit" it, and carried its speed along with him. He then went on to the Mill of Whitehills. James Fraser was hard at work, and the mill was at its utmost speed when he arrived. Legge stopped the mill for a little and went amongst the machinery for a little, and did something by which the speed and power of the mill were tripled. The mill was again set in motion, and wrought with such speed that

it required two men to empty the corn bags into the hopper to have the grain "sheelt" or de-husked. If any bag-binding chanced to be somewhat difficult to unloose and require a little time, the hopper was empty. To keep the machinery always full the miller of Bruxie seized a hatchet and chopped off the mouths of the bags, saying there was no time to unloose knots. The tenants were all in the mill with their winnowers and sifters, for the shelled grain had to be winnowed on the "shillin hill" by the hand, and the meal had all to be sifted. When they saw the mill going at such a speed, and that there was no time to keep separate the different parcels of grain, and over and above that their sacks were all being destroyed, they begged the miller to stop and grind their grain in the usual time. They took a pledge that they would never enter into any such plot.

2. A miller lived in Laggan, and had a wide fame as a man of skill. On one occasion a neighbour lost the power of speech and the use of one of his hands. A witch, it was suspected, had been at work and brought this evil on the man. The miller was consulted. He said he would do his best to give him back his faculties if it was a witch that had taken them away; but if it was paralysis from the hand of God, he could do nothing. He had two faithful trustworthy men that assisted him in his business. He took them into his confidence, and laid an oath on them that they would help him in his task. He sent the one to take his stand with a drawn sword in his hand at the ford through the stream that supplied the mill-dam with water. He told him that if it was a witch that had wrought the evil on the man a bitch would make her appearance. The other he placed beside the "cloose." He himself went into the mill. After no long time a bitch came on the man at the ford, began to snarl fiercely, and altogether behaved in such a threatening manner that in terror he deserted his post. The bitch then went to the man stationed to guard the "cloose" and prevent her from letting the water on the mill. She behaved to him in the same threatening manner, and asked him to draw the "cloose" and let the water on the mill. For a time he stood firm, but, when she threatened to kill him, he became frightened and fled. She at once undid the "cloose," let the water on the mill, and then made for it with all haste. When she entered, the machinery was in motion, and the miller in great jeopardy of his life. By some means or other he, however, got her between the stones. He then demanded of her to give back the stricken man his health. She said she would not, and struggled to get free. He still held her fast, and threatened to smash her if she would not grant the request, and another crush was given. This brought the promise to give back a measure of health to the man. She was then set free, and the man regained in some degree the power of speech

and the use of his hand. In the process the mill was broken to pieces, the miller was seized with headache which never left him. The witch herself was so bruised that she died no long time after.—*Told to Ann Forbes (aged 72), when a girl, by an Aunt, then 88 years of age, and who died at the age of 98.*

3. A simpleton and a miller, that were known to each other, met one day. The miller thought to show off his wit on him, and accosted him with the salutation: "Ye're a feel (fool)." "A ken that," was the answer. "De ye ken ony ither thing," said the miller. "Oo, aye, there's some things it a ken, an some things it a dinna ken." "Weel, tell me some o' them." "Weel, a ken it the miller's swine's aye fat, bit a dinna ken fahs (whose) meel they're fed oot o'."—*Pitsligo.*

THE DEAF MILLER.

4. One took another by the nose, and put the question: "Is the deaf miller at hame?" "No, he's awa grin'in groats till's swine," was the answer.—*Tyrie.*

III.—RIDDLES.

1. Who was the blind miller mentioned in the Bible?—Samson.

(Banchory)

2 (a). I threw a white thing into the water and it came out black.—A miller's shoe.

(Grantown)

(b). It gid into the water white an cam oot black.

(Fraserburgh, Lonmay)

(c). What goes into the water white an comes oot black?

(Meiklefolia)

IV.—PROVERBIAL SAYINGS.

1. An honest miller is worth the muter.

2. He has the impudence o' a miller's horse.

3. He hiz a miller's thum.

4. The miller aye tak's the best muter wi's ain han.

5 (a). The miller's soo is aye best fed.

(b). The miller's soo is aye fattest.

6. There's muckle water rins by when the miller sleeps.

7. Ye're like the miller's dochter—spens what three groats grow on.

8. Ye're like the miller's dog—ye lick your lips ere the pock be opened.

MEAL.

I.

1. Old people looked with much reverence on meal as well as bread. To abuse in any way either the one or the other was regarded as profane. To trample under foot either the smallest quantity of meal or the least piece of bread was considered a mark of one devoid of a proper frame of spirit. To cast anything of what was called "meals-corn" into the fire, was set down as nearly allied to crime. Every particle of meal and every crumb of bread had to be carefully swept up and thrown out in such a place as to be picked up as food by some of God's creatures. It was believed that any one, man or woman, that was guilty of burning meal or crumbs would sooner or later come to want. Children were trained by parents that were well-disposed, honest; and thrifty, to look on meal and bread as gifts of God, and to be used with reverence. When any one was seen abusing meal or bread in any way, such remarks might be heard as:—"Ye may come to wint yet"; "Ye may be glaid o't yet"; "Ye may be bright for wint yet."—*Keith*.

II.—MEAL IN CUSTOM.

1. Among the poor crofters and small farmers, when their meal fell short, as it sometimes did, and when they had not grain ready for grinding, it was quite common to borrow from a neighbour as much as would tide over the difficulty. The meal was willingly given, and must punctually returned when the new supply came from the mill, and not unfrequently with interest in accordance with the saying:—"A borrow sud gyang lauchin hame."—*Keith, General*.

2. There were some, that if they had just taken in meal from the mill—"gotten in a mailyar,"—would not give any in loan till part of the "mailyer" had been used in the household.—*Pitsligo*.

3. When a farmer or crofter took home from the mill a "mailyer o' meal," *i.e.*, the quantity of meal ground at one time, sometimes a little of it was mixed with sugar and whisky and each of the household got a small portion of the dainty morsel. It was a sort of inauguration of the meal. It was then carefully packed into the "mehl-kist" or "meal-bowie," according as it was a chest or barrel.—*Keith*.

4 (a). When the meal was brought from the mill, a "bossiefou" or a "pailfou" of it was taken and given to some poor neighbour.—*Keith*.

(b). Such a gift of meal from the "mailyer" was in some places called a "brose o' meal," *i.e.*, as much meal as would make a dish of brose. The quantity sent was always larger than what would make one dish.—*Tyrie*.

5. On the day after the marriage it was the custom that the wives and mothers of those who sailed in the same boat with the bridegroom presented themselves at the house of the newly-married pair, each with a basin of oat-meal. The basin is given as well as the meal.—*Cairnbulg, Inverallochie.*

6. When a cradle was borrowed it was accounted unlucky to send it empty. Sometimes a little meal in a bag was put into it.—*Keith.*

7. Among the ceremonies gone through with the bride when she is brought into her own home one was to lead her to the “meal-bowie” or giral and plunge her hand into the meal as far as possible.—*Parts of Banffshire.*

8. The first time a child was taken into a neighbour’s house something was placed in its hand. It was commonly a piece of bread, sometimes a coin. Or a pinch of meal was put into its mouth. If this were not done, hunger was left on the house.—*Keith.*

9 (a). Iron in some form—-a nail, a knife, or a knitting wire—was thrust into the meal in a house in which a death took place to keep it from becoming rotten.—*Keith.*

(b). When a death took place a rusty nail was stuck into the meal in the house to prevent it from losing the “fusion.”—*Cawdor.*

(c). On a death taking place a rusty nail was stuck into everything eatable. Unless this were done it had “a bad taste.”—*Dyke.*

III.—MEAL AND WITCHES.

1. Witches had the power of taking the substance, “fusion,” or life-giving and life-sustaining power from meal and other articles of food, so that however much was eaten the craving of hunger was never satisfied.—*T. Mackenzie (aged 83), Urray.*

IV.—MEAL AND FAIRIES, &C.

1 (a). Tom-more, a place not far from Abergeldie Castle, was a favourite haunt of fairies. On one occasion two men laden with meal pokes were returning from the Mill of Coel to Kintoce (?). Passing Tom-more they heard music and dancing. One of them, led by curiosity, went to the place whence proceeded the sounds of mirth. On seeing the dancers he joined them, and danced with the bag on his back. His companion called on him to stop dancing and to come along with him. It was in vain. Dance he must. His companion at last left him and went home. Twelve months after he returned and found his friend still dancing with the sack on his back. He rushed

among the dancers and called out, "God save's a'." The fairies fled, and the man stopped his dancing, and nothing would persuade him that he had danced so long.—*Ballater*.

(b). A fairy came every night to a farmhouse in Braemar and got something. On one occasion the gueedwife gave her meal out of the giral. It was never empty afterwards.—*Braemar*.

(c). Fairies often borrowed from man. What they borrowed was given back most punctually. Meal was an article they often borrowed, and they always asked a fixed measure, a "hathish-cogfull." If offered more they would not take it. This borrowing was usually made in the gloamin, and by the females. In a parish on the coast of Buchan, one wild night in winter, in the gloamin, a little woman dressed in green went into a farm kitchen and begged for a "hathish o' meal" from the gueedwife. She told the beggar that she was somewhat afraid to give away so much, as the stock was well nigh exhausted, and grain had been just taken to the mill, and it would be some time before a new stock could be laid in. Besides, the weather was stormy, and everything betokened a long snowstorm. It was forecast to last thirteen weeks. Still the gueedwife gave the little woman the meal. Not many days after the little woman returned in the gloamin and gave back the meal. At the same time she asked how much meal was in the giral. On getting an answer that there was not much, she gave strict orders to gather into one corner what of it remained, add to it what she returned for the loan made to her, and always keep it well packed together. She at the same time told them that a snowstorm was coming that would last thirteen weeks. The storm came down, the roads were blocked, and no meal could be carried from the mill; yet the meal in the corner never grew less, notwithstanding the household had the usual supply all through the thirteen weeks the snow lay on the ground and blocked the roads.—*Aberdour*.

(d). Near the farm of Galton, about two miles from Tarland, there is a hollow in which fairies lived. One night they went to the farm of Galton and asked some meal in loan. The gueedwife refused to give them. A curse was pronounced on the family, who were Farquharsons:—"As lang as corn and strae grows to the meen, the Farquharsons nae mair shall thrive." The house was burned, and sickness was rarely out of the household.—*Ballater*.

V.—RIDDLES.

1. What goes throuw the widd faster nor drift?—Meal through the sieve.
(Leochel-Cushnie, Banchory)

VI.—RHYMES.

1.

A farmer's toast ran thus :—
 Health and wealth, milk and meal ;
 Aul' Clouty rock them in a creel
 Fha winna wiss us a' weel.
 (Leochel-Cushnie)

2.

I've a rock an I've a reel,
 I've a dainty spinnin wheel,
 I've a kist it's fou o' meal,
 An that'll feed the bairnies weel.
 (Banff)

VII.—PROVERBIAL SAYINGS.

1. Coarse oatmeal was spoken of as being "gey ill wi' kiffins," *i.e.*, parts of the husks.

2. Lang be yer meal-poke, an aye yer nieve i' the neuk o't.

3. That's as gueede's aul' mehl in's (in her) kist.

Said when one has done anything to call forth retaliation to be done at a future time.

4. A bouw o' mehl windna dit their moo's it says that.

Used when a piece of news, especially scandal, is talked of by everyone.

5. (a). He'll seen lick that pyockie o' meel. (b). He'll get that pyockie o' meel lickit.

Said when anything that has been got by heirdom or otherwise is soon used up, commonly with the notion of waste.

BREAD.

HOUSEHOLD BREADS.

I.—KINDS OF BREAD.

1. Forty or fifty years ago very little wheaten bread was used by the common people in the north of Scotland. Oat or bere meal cakes formed the chief staple of life. When, therefore, they were spoken of they were not called "oat cakes" or "oat cake," but "ait brehd" or "breed," or "behr or bere brehd" or "breed." Sometimes bread was made of a mixture of pease meal with oat or bere meal, and was called "pease bread." At times beans were used instead of peas, and then the bread was called "bean bread." Sometimes the meal was made from a mixture of oats and bere. It was called "mixt meal," and the bread baked from it was called "mixt bread." This mixture of oats and bere was prepared by sowing the two together. The oats were sown first and then the bere. The phrase was, "to spark in" the bere, or "to pit a sparkin o' bere amo' the aits." The crop went by the name of "mashlach." This mixed crop gave a better mixture than to mix the two kinds of meal.—*Keith, Enzie.*

2. Wheaten bread bore the name of "loaf," or "fite brehd" or "fite breed." A slice of it was called, and is called, "a sheeve o' fite brehd" or "fite breed."—*General*.

3. Oaten cakes are baked on a thin round piece of iron hung over a bright strong fire. This utensil is called a "girdle," and every household has one.—*General*.

4. The meal is mixed with water in a round, wooden dish wrought out of a block of hard wood, called a "bossie." Now-a-days the dish is for the most part of stoneware. After being well wrought with the hands in the "bossie," the leaven is turned out on a square board, called the "bake-brod" or "baking brod," covered over with meal and well kneaded. The mass is then rolled out with the "roller" or "rollin pin" in a circular form. All the dry meal is then brushed off with the "bakin wisker," a small bunch of feathers tightly bound together. The cake is then turned and the underside is also brushed clean. There are two modes of turning the cake. One is by tossing it. This requires a good deal of skill, as there is the danger of doubling and thus breaking it when it is turning. It is now put on the "girdle," and first baked on one side. When sufficiently baked on the under side, it is divided commonly into four pieces by drawing the "bakin-knife" through the centre first from one side and then from the other. These pieces are called "quarters" or "quorters," according to the pronunciation of the district. Sometimes these quarters are wholly divided into two parts each, and sometimes cut through in part.—*General*.

5. Bread is of various kinds. One kind is baked thick and fired on both sides on the "girdle," and goes by the name of "thick bread." Another kind is baked thinner, and on one side only on the "girdle." It is placed in front of a bright fire, and fully baked. It is called "hard bread" or "fact bread." Sometimes the cake is washed over with cream or butter milk, and the bread so treated is called "wattirt bread." At times a little cream or fat is put in the leaven, and then the bread bears the name of "ream or rehm bread," or "fat bread."—*Keith, General*.

6. A kind of bread used to be baked of mashed potatoes and oat meal. It was baked in the usual way, and had the name of "tatie bread" or "tatie scones."—*Keith*.

7. Another kind of bread is made called "bannocks." The meal is mixed and kneaded in the same way as for cakes. The kneaded leaven is not rolled out as for cakes, but just kneaded out to sufficient thinness with the knuckles. The dry meal is then swept off, and the bannock is laid on the "branner," "branther" (*Keith*), to be baked. Sometimes it is placed in front

of a bright fire to be baked. A little fat or cream may be added to make it "free," and thus more dainty.—*General*.

11.—CEREMONIES AND OMENS.

1. The young woman that is in the habit of burning bread when baking, or of allowing any of the meal to fall on the floor or in the fire, will not prove a thrifty wife. The saying is :—

"Nivver mairy the lass
It (that) burns the brehd, or spills the meal,
She'll ne'er dee weel t' child nor chiel (man)."

—*Corgarff*.

2. Of one that spills the meal when baking it is said :—"She'll come t' be glad t' lick the mill-waas" (mill-walls).—*Pitsligo*.

3. If the leaven is not properly made, when it is being rolled out into the cake, holes break in it, and the baker is reproved with the words :—"Ye're bakin oot the miller's ee" or "the miller's een."—*Pitsligo*.

4. If the first cake, when oat-meal cakes are being baked, breaks, strangers will eat some of that baking.

5. If bread breaks much in the act of baking strangers will eat of it.—*Cawdor, Dyke, Corgarff, Pitsligo, Garmouth*.

6. In baking the bridal bread great care was taken with the first cake so that it might not be broken. A broken first baked cake portended unhappiness in the married life.—*Keith*.

7 (a). It is unlucky for a woman to sing when she is baking. The saying is :—"Them it sings fin they're bakin, greets or the bread be deen." My informant was once baking and began to sing. For her pains she got a box on the cheek and was told to stop.—*Roseheart*.

(b). A woman, if she sings when baking, will "greet" before evening.—*Macduff*.

(c). A woman should not sing during the time she is baking. As long as she sings during the time she bakes, she will "greet" before the bread is eaten.—*Pitsligo*.

(d). If a woman sings during the time of baking, she will loose a near friend by death.—*Corgarff*.

8 (a). A woman when baking should not allow the "girdle" to hang empty over the fire. As long as it hangs empty, so long will she have to sit on the "bride-steel," i.e., the bride stool, the seat on which the bride sat till the marriage ceremony began, waiting the arrival of the bridegroom.—*Pitsligo, Peterhead*.

(b). If a woman in baking does not keep the "girdle" full, she will have to wait for the coming of the bridegroom on the day of the marriage.—*Auldearn*.

9. The "girdle" should not be taken off the fire with the bread on it. If this were done the bread would not last.—*Dyke*.

10 (a). A cake should not be turned twice on the "girdle," and the baker is always most careful in lifting a corner of it and examining whether it is sufficiently "fired" or baked before she cuts and turns it.—*Pitsligo*.

(b). If an unmarried woman did so, she would become the mother of an illegitimate child.—*Pitsligo*.

(c). If a woman great with child did so, her child would become "cake-grown," i.e., the child would become bent till the belly rested on the thighs.—*Aberdour*. Told by an old woman, who, when a girl, has heard her mother and other old women speak of it.

11 (a). If cakes are burnt in the baking, the baker will shed tears before they are eaten.—*Peterhead*.

(b). Burnt cakes mean that the baker will meet with something to cause anger before they are eaten.—*Pitsligo*.

12. When the bread is taken off the "girdle," the cakes should not be laid flat, but placed on the edge.—*Dyke*.

13. If the "girdle" is over the fire and bread on it when a new servant enters, she will prove a good and faithful servant and stay in the family for a long time.—*Corgarff*.

14 (c). It was accounted unlucky to count the number of cakes after finishing the baking of them.—*Dyke*.

(b). It was looked upon as not thrifty to count the cakes in a "baking."—*Carvdor*.

(c). A common saying was :—"There's nae thrift in coontit cakes, as the fairies eat the half o' them."—*Keith*.

15 (a) When baking is going on children are fond of breaking off small pieces of the hot cakes on the "girdle" and eating them. Some women when baking do not allow this practice, whilst others do. Two wives were neighbours. Both had families. One mother would not allow her children to "nip" the cakes. The other did, and her children grew up healthy, strong, and fit for their work. The children of the other were not so strong. Both wives happened on one occasion to be working together on the field with some members of their families. The woman that allowed her children to break off and eat the hot cakes, along with her children, kept ahead of the other woman and her children at the work. Seeing how matters stood, in her joy of beating

her neighbour, she called out :—"Come on, nip-cakes, an lat hehl breed staan."—*Pitsligo*.

(b). Come oot, nip cakes, an let hale bread stan.—*Meiklefolla*.

III.—BREAD IN USE.

1 (a). When eating oat cakes one must not begin with the "croon o' the quarter." If one looked as if going to do so, the caution would be given :—"Dinna braik the croon o' the quarter." If one did break it off, it had to be put back and the body of the quarter eaten first.—*Meiklefolla*.

(b). It was accounted unlucky to begin with the "croon."—*Inverurie, Corgarff*.

(c). In other places, if one did so, another at the table would have given a sharp rap on the knuckles, and thrown the rest of the quarter to him (or her).—*Pitsligo*.

(d). It is accounted bad manners to take the "croon o' the quarter" first when one begins to eat bread. One must begin from the broad end.—*Daviot, Auldearn, Keith, Pitsligo, etc.*

(e). If one in eating cakes broke the "croon o' the quarter," the baker would meet with a fatal accident.—*Corgarff*.

2 (a). The "trencher" "truncher" is on no account to be empty on the table. If the bread is looking as if coming to an end, more is at once put on. If it gets empty through neglect, it may become empty through want.—*Meiklefolla*.

(b). The trencher on which the cakes were placed is at times made of wood, and is called "the man" or "the breed man."—*Pitsligo*.

3. Cakes must always be laid on "the man" with the "richt side up," that is in the same way in which it was placed on the "girdle." To place cakes with the "vrang side up" before one would be regarded as an insult. Tradition has it that it was only to Mentieth, who betrayed Wallace, and to his descendants cakes were served up in this way. Hence the proverb :—"Turn the bannock wi' a fause Mentieth."—*Keith*.

IV.—BREAD IN CUSTOM.

1. A cradle that was borrowed was not taken into the house without having something put into it. Some put into it a little cakes.—*Strichen*.

2. If a child had to be taken to a neighbour's house, or to the church to be baptized, the woman that carried the child carried also some bread and cheese. Another of the attendants carried a bottle of whisky, with a "dram-

glass." The first person met received bread and cheese and a "dram," who usually turned and walked a little way with the company.—*Keith, General.*

3. When the child was baptized at home bread and cheese were served to the minister and those present. It would have been looked on as an utter want of respect and unlucky to have refused to partake of them. Commonly whisky was offered.—*General.*

4. It was the custom for one of the marriage party to carry bread and cheese on the journey to the church or to fetch the bride. The first person met was treated, and usually turned and walked a short way with the party. Whisky was also carried, and a "dram" given.—*General.*

5. A new female servant would not go home to her situation till the old one had left. When she entered the house where she was to be servant, food was placed before her. The first work she was put to was to bake. The mistress handed her the baking "troch," i.e., trough, packed quite full of meal. If the servant handed it back full of cakes to her mistress in the same way as she received it, her mistress looked on her as her match in all kinds of work.—*Corgarff.*

6. After the bride and bridegroom had gone to bed, bread and cheese were handed to the bride, with a bottle of whisky. The room in which they were to sleep was immediately filled with the guests. Each got from the bride a piece of bread and cheese, and such as would take it received a "dram."—*General.*

7. Bread was not baked in a house in which a dead body was lying. If it was baked it became mouldy and blue and unfit for use. If bread had to be baked, it was done in a neighbour's house. If such bread broke much in the act of being baked, it was an indication that another of the family would soon die.—*Corgarff.*

8 (a). On the night of the day of the funeral bread and water were placed in the apartment in which the dead body lay. It was believed that the spirit of the dead one came back and partook of the bread and water for the last time on that night. My informant said that he has heard it most positively asserted that such a thing has been known to have taken place.—*Strathdon.*

(b). Unless bread and water were set out in the apartment in which the dead body lay for the spirit to partake of on the night after the funeral, the spirit could not rest in peace.—*Buckie.*

9. When the plough was "strykit," i.e. stretched, or put into the soil for the first time in autumn after harvest or in spring, to prepare the soil for the seed, bread and cheese with ale or whisky were carried to the field, and partaken of by the members of the household. Pieces of bread and cheese

were put into the plough, and others were thrown over the field "to feed the crows."—*Keith*.

10. On the day the plough was first put into the soil after harvest for preparing it for the next crop—was "streekit"—a few cakes of oatmeal were baked. To make them a little more dainty, they were commonly rubbed on the upper side with cream before being laid on the "girdle" to be baked. Cream, which, if scarce, was saved up with much care, was churned, and made into butter. When the bread and the butter were prepared, the gueed-wife took a portion of each along with a "kebback" and a bottle of whisky, and went to the field to the ploughman—commonly the gueedman himself or a son, for in those old days in many districts each family tilled its own holding. He cut the cheese, and partook of the dainties carried to the field. A piece of the cakes was given to each horse. The whole household partook at supper of the bread, the butter, and the cheese.—*Pitsligo*. (*Told by one whose mother followed the custom.*)

11. There were some who would begin to plough for the first time during the season on Saturday. Here is the custom followed by an old farmer. By the time the ploughman was at the end of the field with the first furrow, his master was beside him carrying bread, cheese, and a bottle of whisky. The servant partook of the bread and cheese, and then received a glass of whisky. The old man drank a glass of the whisky, then filled the glass again, and poured it over the bridle of the plough, and repeated the words, "Weel fah the lawbour." Pieces of the bread and cheese were carefully wrapped up in paper and firmly tied to the beam of the plough by the farmer, who at the same time laid strict orders on the servant not to take them off. "It may fa' aff o't sell, or the dogs may eht it. Nae maitter, bit dinna ye touch't," were his words. When all this was done and said, the old man added, "Noo, jist tak ye anither fur, and syne louse. Ye'll be ready for yir wark on Munin-day's mornin'."—*Strachan*.

12. When the plough was first yoked for the season after harvest bread and cheese were carried to the field and given to the ploughman.—*Corgarff*.

13. Such an entertainment was called the "Pleuch-Fehst."—*Strathdon*.

14. When boys went to bathe they took a piece of cakes with them. When they left the water they ate the cakes, which went by the name of the "chatterin piece." This was supposed to prevent any evil consequences from cold.—*Keith*.

15 (a). It was believed that there were hillocks over which if one walked sudden hunger, often accompanied with a weak, trembling feeling, came on. Such spots were called "hungry hillocks," and acquired this character if food

had been eaten on them, and no crumbs of bread left. My informant has had such hillocks pointed out to him.—*Strathdon.*

(b). "I've surely gehn (gone) ower a hungry hillock," is a saying used by one who after a journey or on any occasion enjoys food with more than ordinary appetite.—*Keith.*

V.—BREAD AND WITCHES.

A witch, when she changed herself into a hare, could not be hit by an ordinary shot. A piece of bread (or a sixpence) had to be put into the gun with the ordinary charge. Bread was looked upon as sacred, and hence its virtue against the powers of evil.—*Alvie.*

VI.—BREAD AND FAIRIES.

1. If the dry meal on a cake is not fully wiped off before the cake is placed on the "girdle" it sometimes bursts into a blaze. It is the fairies that set it on fire.—*Corgarff.*

2 (a). When it rains while the sun is shining it is said that the fairies are baking their bread.—*Keith.*

(b). A day of alternate rain and sunshine is called "The gueede folk's or the fairies' bakin day." The rain furnishes the rain to make the leaven, and the sun "fires" the bread.—*Ballater.*

3. A farmer's wife was baking one day when a little man dressed in green came in and asked a little piece of bread. She gave it. The little man then told her that neither she nor hers should ever come to want. He went up a hill near the farm and disappeared in it.

VII.—BREAD AND KELPIE.

Kelpie at times stole the bread. About the beginning of last century the houses of the farm called the Old Haes of Atherb stood on the brae near the spot at which the railway to Peterhead crosses the Ugie in the parish of Deer. They had to be removed farther from the river because of the annoyance caused to folks of the farm by kelpie. One of his pranks was to steal the cakes off the "girdle" every time an attempt was made to bake bread after nightfall.—*Deer.*

CEREMONIAL CAKES.

FASTRENSEVEN.

1. In the evening bannocks were baked. These bannocks were composed of whisked or "clouckit" eggs, milk, and oatmeal, with a little salt. In later times there were some that used flour instead of oatmeal, and sweetened the mixture with sugar. They were baked on the "girdle" and in presence of all, and all took a hand in the work. One poured the unbaked mixture on the girdle, another turned the cake, another took off the cake, another sat holding a dish to receive the baked cakes, and all were busy eating them.—*Keith*.

2 (a). The evening's amusements were concluded by the baking of the same ingredients into a cake of much thicker consistency than the others. This cake was called the "sautie bannock." The one that baked had to keep silent during the process of baking. Every means was used to make the baker break silence. If she was inadvertently betrayed into uttering a word, another took her place. The same means was used with her. If she broke the silence laid on her another took up the work. This went on till the bannock was baked. A ring was put into it. When baked it was cut into as many pieces as there were unmarried persons present. Each chose a piece. The one that got the piece containing the ring was the first to enter married life.—*Keith*.

(b). The last cake baked was used for the purpose of divination. The material used for the ordinary bannocks was thickened with oatmeal, and into the mixture were dropped various articles as a means of indicating the rank or occupation of the one to be got in marriage; thus, a bawbee indicated a bachelor; a farthing, a widower; a button, a tailor; a piece of straw, a farmer; a piece of cloth, a clothier; a nail, a blacksmith. The cake had to be baked in silence, and every means was used to make the baker break the silence. If she did break the silence, another took her place. The same was attempted with her, and, if she gave way, she had to yield the post to another. This went on till the bannock was baked. When baked it was cut in pieces by the baker. She then put the pieces in her apron, was blindfolded, and took her stand at the back of the door. Piece after piece she took in her hand and called out: "Fah yaas this?" One claimed it, and according to what was in the piece the occupation of the future husband or wife was divined.—*Garmouth*.

MAY DAY CAKES.

1. When the ewes were shorn or "clippit" they were milked. From the milk was made a cheese, and this cheese was kept till the first day of May. On the morning of that day an oatmeal bannock was baked by the goodwife

for each member of the household. An egg was whipped and spread over it, first on one side and then on the other, in the act of being "fired." When it was laid on the "branner" the sign of the cross was made over it, as also when it was turned. About 9 o'clock a.m. the goodman cut the cheese with the kitchen knife after making the sign of the cross over it. A slice of the cheese was laid on a piece of each bannock for each one of the household. Each piece of each bannock and each slice of cheese had to be eaten by each member of the family before sunset. The remainder of the "kebback" or cheese was kept till Lammas (1st of August), when the whole had to be eaten before sunset, even although the dogs had to get part of it. No special bannock was baked for that day.—*Corgarff*.

2. On the first day of May the children received each an egg and a cake. With these they proceeded to the hill—as many as twenty and thirty in company. They gathered materials, formed a bonfire, and roasted their eggs in the ashes. Before laying the egg in the ashes each child put a mark on it so as to be able to identify it when taken from the ashes. The cake was commonly baked between 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning. It was kneaded entirely in the hand and not on a table or board like other cakes. It was placed in front of the peat fire on the hearth, with a stone to support it, and baked in that position. After being so baked it was put into the child's hand and not on any table or dish. It must never be put from the hand, except to be baked in front of the fire. If laid on anything it was nothing more than an ordinary bannock. It was called "tcharnican" (spelt phonetically), because it was made wholly in and by the hand (dearnick, hand), and the word means "hand-cake." It has also been interpreted "the little defence or guard."—*Achterneed*.

3. Bannocks were baked on Beltane Eve called "Beltane Bannocks." They were baked in the usual way, but with this addition—they were washed over or "watered" with a thin batter made of milk or cream, whipped eggs, and a little oatmeal. Before being laid on the "brander," "branner" or "branthir," i.e., the gridiron, the upper side was washed over with this mixture. When the under side was sufficiently baked or "fired," the upper side was turned down and the under side was now "watered." The bannock was then allowed to hang over the fire till fully baked or "fired." On Beltane, about mid-day, the young folks went to the rocks or high ground, and rolled them down hill. If one broke, its owner would die before next Beltane. The young folks eat part of them, left each a "bittie" on the hill to the "cuack," i.e., the cuckoo, and carried a piece home. This piece was put under the pillow in the name of the sweetheart to find out if dreams would reveal the

future as to marriage. Eggs were not used in the preparations of any other ceremonial bannocks.—*Kingussie*.

4. The bannocks were baked any time during the day before Beltane. It was accounted unlucky if one's bannock broke in the baking.—*Daviot, Strathnairn*.

5. Bannocks were baked in the usual way and about four inches in diameter. They were "watered" with whipped egg. One was made for each of the family, and a mark was put upon it so that it might be given to the one for whom it was baked. After 4 o'clock in the afternoon all the members of the household went to the top of a rising ground or slope, and rolled the bannocks to the bottom. Omens of good or bad fortune or of death were drawn from the way in which they rolled. If one fell before it reached the bottom, some evil was to happen to its owner. If one broke, its owner was to die before next Beltane. Each rolled the bannock three times.—*Corgarff*.

6. The bannocks were baked very thick of oatmeal. They were watered with a mixture of milk or cream, whipped egg and milk. They were baked on the gridiron. When placed on it, a peat thoroughly clean on fire so as not to give out smoke was held over the upper side till the "watering" was quite dry. The bannock was then turned, and the underside was rubbed over with the mixture. One was baked for each member of the household. On Beltane all the members of the household went to roll the bannocks. They were afterwards eaten, each by its owner.—*Dyke*.

7. All the cattle in a district were put to pasture on the same day—Beltane. Each herd on setting out with the animals got a bannock called the Beltane Bannock.—*Urray*.

BANNOCK AND THE BANSHEE.

8. On two hills in the Highlands of Aberdeenshire the Banshee had to be propitiated by the traveller over the hills. This was done by placing near a well on the top of each hill a barley meal cake marked on one side by a round O. If the cake was not left, death or some dire calamity befel the traveller. On one occasion a woman had to cross one of them. She neglected to leave the customary offering. She paid the penalty. She died at a cairn not far from the well. The cairn bears the name of Carn Alshish, *i.e.*, Elspet's Cairn.

The victim on the other hill was a man. He had omitted to pay the usual tribute, and the omission cost him his life.—*J. F., Corgarff*.

TEETHING BANNOCK.

9. This was a bannock baked when a child's first tooth began to shew itself. It was baked in the same way as other bannocks, but into it were put a ring, a button, and a sixpence. When prepared a few neighbours were called to a little merrymaking. The bannock was broken and each guest got a piece. Ale formed part of the entertainment. The ring meant, as usual, marriage.—*Dyke*.

10. On the first symptoms of the child's cutting teeth, a bannock was baked. It was made of oatmeal. Butter or cream was added. Sometimes a ring was put into it. The work was carried through in presence of a few friends and without a word being spoken. When baked, it was given to the child to play with till it was broken. A small piece was then put into the child's mouth, if it had not done so of its own accord. Each one present carried away a piece. This bannock went by the name of "teethin bannock" or "teethin plaster," and was supposed to ease the pains and troubles of teething.—*Keith*.

BAPTISMAL OR "CIRSAN" BANNOCK.

11. When a child was to be baptized, a cake called the "Cirsan" bannock was baked. It was baked in the usual way. It was carried with the child both to and from the church. When taken from the church it was broken into pieces, which were given to the young folks of neighbours and friends. They put them below the pillow in the name of their sweethearts to call forth dreams, and from them they might be able to know the future as to marriage.—*Kingussie*.

FESTAL BREAD.

I.—CHRISTMAS BREAD.

1 (a). Before Christmas as much bread was baked as sufficed for the whole time of the festival. It was called "The Yeel Brehd."—*Keith*.

(b). It had to be baked before day-break. The usual practice was to begin to bake by two or three in the morning, so as to have the work completed in proper time.—*Strathdon*.

(c). The baking of it began after all the household had gone to rest, and had to be finished before morning.—*Pitsligo*. (Told by one who followed the custom).

(d). It was baked before dawn on the morning of the day before Christmas.—*Daviot*.

(e). It was baked on Christmas Eve. If it broke much in the baking it was an indication that hungry folk would eat of it.—*Cawdor*.

(f). It had to be baked on Christmas morning. The work was begun as soon after midnight as possible, and had to be finished before day-break.—*Auldearn*.

2. A big log of wood was prepared some time on the day before Christmas called the "Yeel Carlin" or "Yeel Cyarlin." It was placed on the fire between 8 and 9 o'clock in the evening, and the baking of the "Yeel Brehd" was begun. The meal when put into the baking trough was signed with the sign of the cross, and so were the first and last cakes. The dough of this bread was "vrocht into the heart," or in the way contrary to the usual way. The cake was cut into four pieces before being placed on the "girdle," also contrary to the ordinary way of placing the cake uncut on the "girdle," and each piece or "quarter" was laid separately on the girdle. The "quarters" must not be lifted to examine if the under side was sufficiently baked lest they might be broken, which would have brought disaster on the one for whom the cake was baked. When it was supposed that the under side was fully baked, the "quarters" were taken off the "girdle" and placed in front of the fire till they were baked to the full. When baked they were placed on edge, two and two slantwise like the couples of a house, with one at each end. A cake, *i.e.*, four "quarters," was baked for each member of the household. If one's cake broke, death would take place within the year. This bread was called "The Family Bread." The whole was laid in a basket or sieve and covered with a white cloth. Each one's four "quarters" were placed by themselves. The basket or sieve was set on the middle of the table at each diet, and each used his own or her own portion. If a stranger was present other bread was placed on the table.—*Corgarff*.

3. In the part of Morayshire round about Garmouth the "Yeel Brehd" had to be baked before 5 o'clock in the morning, or as it was at times expressed, "afore the deel geed (went) by Binns." There is a hill called the Binn not far from Garmouth. The devil is said to live in it at a spot named The Fairies' Kitchen, a small level piece of ground clear of trees and bushes. He was supposed to be always early astir. Hence the origin of the saying which is still applied to one who is up betimes.—*Garmouth*. Told by one to whom the proverb has been applied.

4 (a). The "Yeel Brehd" was baked on the day before Christmas in the "dow" of the day, *i.e.*, between mid-day and 6 o'clock p.m. The rhyme is :

Bake yer Yeel Brehd i' the dow,
An that 'ill mack yer bairns thrive and grow.—*Corgarff*.

(b). The Yeel Brehd was baked any time on the 24th.—*Braemar*.

5. The Yeel Brehd should not be counted. If counted, there would be one less in the household to eat it by next Christmas. Death would come and take one away.—*Aberdour*.

CHRISTMAS BANNOCK.

6. On Christmas Eve, after nightfall, a bannock of oat meal was baked for each member of the household. If it broke in the act of being baked; something evil would fall within the year on the one for whom it was baked.—*Kingussie*.

7 (a). In baking the "Yeel Brehd" a cake was baked in the name of each member of the family. If one broke, the one in whose name it was being baked would die before next Christmas.—*Pitsligo, Keith*.

(b). If a piece only broke, it indicated that there would be bad health in the course of the year.—*Keith*.

SOUR CAKES FOR CHRISTMAS.

8. These cakes were made of oat meal and baked in the usual way. The leaven was made with "sooan swats," i.e., with the water poured off "sooans" after having stood for some time so as to allow the solid part to sink. The leaven was covered up for a few days till it became quite sour. It was baked into cakes on Christmas Eve or early morning before day-break. One side was baked on the girdle, and the baking was completed by placing the cakes on their edge in front of the fire.—*Keith, Dyke*.

"Soor Poos" is the name they get in parts of Moray and Nairn.

9. Part of the Christmas bread was kept as long as possible—for weeks, and at times for months. It was deemed lucky to do so.—*Keith*.

BREAD AND GAMES.

1. Two are chosen—the one to act as "Namer" and the other "Guesser." The other players arrange themselves in a line. The Guesser retires to a distance so as to be out of range of hearing of the other players. The Namer gives to each player a name, as Rose, Golden Spoon, &c. As each player gets his name he turns his back to the Namer. When all have got their names, and thus are standing with their backs to the Namer, he calls out: "Baker, Baker, your bread is burnin," or "Bakerie, Bakerie, your bread is burnin." The Guesser answers: "Will you give a corner o't me?" or

"Give me a corner o't," and takes his stand beside the Namer. The Namer then says :—

Come, cheese me east,
Come, cheese me west,
Come, cheese me t' the (Rose).

The Guesser points to one of the players in the line. If the guess is correct the player goes to the Guesser's side, if not, to the Namer's side. This goes on till all the players are chosen to the last one. This one gets two names, say "Needles" or "Preens." The Namer then says to the Guesser, "Needles" or "Preens?" A guess is made. This is done three times, and each time the names are changed. If the last guess is made correctly the player goes to the Guesser's side, if not, to the Namer's. Sometimes it is decided by the best of three, that is, by two correct guesses out of three. Then comes a "tug-of-war," with the Namer and Guesser as leaders. The victorious side shouts out, "Rotten eggs," "rotten eggs."—*Fraserburgh.*

2. In playing at Hide and Seek, as a warning that the player is going near the person or the article hidden, the following words are repeated :—

Baker, baker, your bread is burnin,
If I had a gully I would turn 't.

—*Crimond.*

FOOLIE, FOOLIE.

3. This game bears the name of "Foolie, foolie." The one who guessed is called "Foolie." When all have got their names, the Namer calls out :—

Foolie, Foolie,
Come t' yer schoolie.

To this call no attention is paid. It is repeated several times, but with no result. At last the Namer calls out :—

Foolie, Foolie,
Come t' yer schoolie,
Yer bannocks are burnin,
An ready for turnin.

This call is always obeyed, and at once. The choosing of those in the game goes on with the words :—

Come, chise me oot,
Come, chise me in,
I' the —.

This formula was used in the game at Keith. The formula of call to the one that guessed the name, and was called witch, was :—

Witchie, Witchie,
Yer bannocks are burnin',
An ready for turnin'.

IV.—“ RIDE AWA' ”

1. This amusement may be made for the child by the mother or nurse dandling the child on her knee in imitation of riding, or, if the child is old enough, it receives a staff or piece of stick, which it puts between its legs, and then moves about as if riding, and repeats the words itself :—

(a)
Ride awa', ride awa',
Ride awa' t' Aiberdeen,
An buy fite breed ;
Bit lang or he cam back again
The cyarlin wiz deed.
He up wi's club, an said,
“ Rise ye up, cyarlin,
An eat fite breed.” (Kinnethmont)

(b)
Ride awa' t' Aiberdeen
T' buy fite breed ;
Bit lang or he cam back again
The cyarlin wiz deed.
Sae he up wee's club
An gyah 'ir o' the lug,
Said, “ Rise, rise, an' cyarlin,
An eet yir fite breed.” (Mrs Moir)

(c)
Ride, horsie, ride ; ride, horsie, ride ;
Ride awa t' Aiberdeen,
An buy fite breed ;
But lang or he came back again,
The carline she was deid.
He up wi's club, an gae her ower the lug,
Cryin, “ Rise up, carlin, an eat fite breid.” (Cushnie)

(d)
Ride, dide, dide,
Ride awa t' Aiberdeen,
An buy white bread ;
Lang or she cam back,
The carline was dead.
Up wi her club, an gae her on the lug,
An said : “ Rise up, carline, and eat white
breed.” (Banff)

(e)
Ride, horsie, ride ; ride, horsie, ride ;
Ride awa tae Aiberdeen,
An buy fite breed ;
An fin he cam back,
The kyarlin she wiz deed.
He took a club,
An geed her o' the lug,
Says, “ Rise up, kyarlin, an eat fite breed.” (Meiklefolla)

(f)
Ride, ride, horsickie ; ride, ride, ride ;
Ride awa tae Aberdeen,
An buy fite breed ;
An lang or he cam back again,
The carlin was deed.
He up wi' his club,
An gae her on the lug,
“ Rise up, carlin,
An ate fite breed ” ;
“ Ate it a' yersel, ” she says
“ For a'm new deed.”

(?)

(g)
Ride, horse, ride, ride, ride, ride,
Ride awa tae Aiberdeen,
An buy fite breed ;
An fin he cam hame again,
The carlin she was deed.
He took up his club,
An geed her on the lug,
Saying, “ Rise up, carlin,
An ate your fite breed.” (Strichen)

(h)
 Ride awa to Aiberdeen,
 An back to Peterheed ;
 An as the carl cam again,
 The carlin she was deed.
 He up wi's club,
 An geed her on the lug,
 An said, " Ah fie ! carlin,
 Rise an eat yer fite breed."

(Meiklefolla)

(i)
 Ride, ride, ride,
 An ride away to Aberdeen,
 An buy fite breed ;
 An ere the carl cam again
 The cyarlin she wiz deed.
 An he up wi' his club
 An lut at her o' the lug,
 Says, " Fy, cyarlin, an eat fite breed,
 An eat fite bread." (?)

RHYMES.

2 (a)
 A bawbee bap,
 A snagrie snap,
 An a tow t' hang the baker.
 (Lonmay)

(b)
 Another form is :—
 A bawbee bap,
 A leathern strap,
 An a tow t' hang the baker.
 (Keith)

(c)
 Another form is :—
 A bawbee bap,
 A leather an a strap,
 An a tow t' hang the baker.
 (Banff)

3
 The quaker's wife sat doon to bake,
 An a' her bairns aboot 'er ;
 To ilka ane she ga a cake,
 But the quaker he got but a quarter.
 (Keith)

PROVERBIAL SAYINGS.

1. To dance like a hen on a het girdle.
2. What ye win at that ye may lick aff a het girdle.
3. When the bakin's bye, hang up the girdle.
4. Yer bread's baken, ye can hing up the girdle.
- 5 (a). Kitchie 't wi the safest side o' yer tongue. (Keith)
- (b). Sliver an sharp teeth's the best kitchie. (Pitsligo)
- (c). Hunger's the best kitchie.

Said to children when asking " Kitchie " to the dry bread (cakes) they were eating.

- 6 (a). He kens on filk side's bread's buttert.
 He knows what is to profit, or he knows too well when a thing is
 to his profit to cast it away.

(b). To quarrel with one's bread and butter.

7. Ae scone o' that bakin's aneuch.

Said when anything turns out a failure, or when one of a family
 or a set of people proves unsatisfactory.

8. Them it disna sup their pottage gets nae brehd, and them it sups
 their pottage disna need ony.

9. Broken bread macks hale bairns.

Said to children when casting aside the small pieces of bread.

10. Spang oot yer spoon meat, yer breed ill keep. (Meiklefollla)
11. The grace o' a grey bannock's the breakin o't. (Kennethmont)
12. Half a loaf's better than nae bread.
13. A bite o' bread or a boll o' meal never brack a horse back.
(Corgarff)
14. His (her) bread's baken, *i.e.*, one is well provided for.
15. He's (she's) like's bannock. He's like's bit.
Applied to one that is in a thriving condition of health.



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